

# The role of peer review journals cannot be replaced by Twitter, blogs, or anything else (and I really believe in blogs!)

by Blog Admin

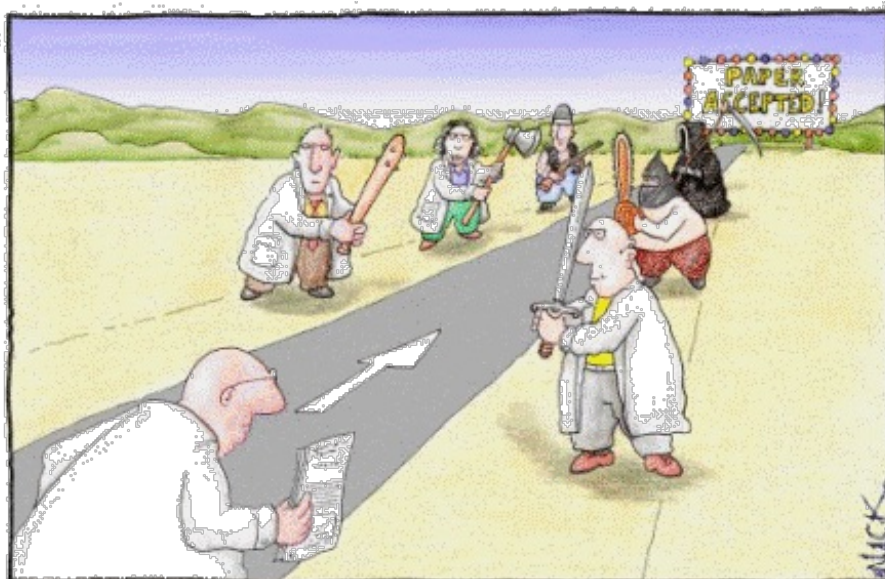
January 9, 2012

*In a response to Jason Priem's post advocating the use of Twitter by academics, [Don Taylor](#) writes that while Twitter, blogs and other social media should be part of academic life, we must not lose the slow, deliberative process that emphasizes thoughtful scholarship behind traditional publication in journals.*



A few weeks back, the LSE Impact of Social Sciences blog published a piece on the [use of twitter by academics](#), written by [Jason Priem](#), that suggested peer review journals might become a thing of the past. Austin Frakt and I wrote a brief post noting that as much as we love the microblog service, the [role of peer review journals cannot be replaced by Twitter](#), blogs, or anything else (and we really believe in blogs!). We need the slow deliberative process that emphasizes trying to get it right, as opposed to doing it quickly. We concluded:

We absolutely need the slow, peer review system as the foundation of thoughtful, careful scholarship. Twitter and other social media are important additions that can give scholarly content “reach” and “relevancy”. However, it’s a both/and, not an either/or proposition. Traditional peer review journals should remain the bedrock of the research evidence that can be brought to bear on health policy.



*Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as 'quite an improvement.'*

However, I think the peer review process often is *too* slow and could be sped up without losing precision. In addition, I think there is too much secrecy in the process and a bit more disclosure would likely be good (though there are likely plusses and minuses).

Following are a few personal thoughts about changes I would like to see in the peer review process used by journals that are based on my personal experience and preferences (I have published 70 peer review papers and reviewed dozens of manuscripts for journals). Others will likely have different thoughts, and I would be interested to know them. This is not meant to be a definitive word, just my personal thoughts.

- The identity of reviewer and reviewee should be known to one another
- The title of manuscripts under review should be public, along with the authors of the manuscript and the identity of the reviewers
- How long the reviewers have been reviewing the manuscript should be public
- How long authors have had a request for revision should be public
- Upon publication, the correspondence between reviewers/editors/authors should be public (this is important because often people say “why didn’t you do this subanalysis”; often it was done, but cut from a published paper due to length restrictions)
- The use of online early publication is a good thing; I wonder if it will eventually become the only modality? (I only take one journal in hard copy now, *Health Affairs*, and otherwise utilize Duke University’s global subscription service)
- Gated papers hinder academic investigation and discourse, but I am unsure of how to fund journals without subscriptions

Making the identify of all parties public and how long they have had to review a manuscript or complete revisions should provide some “speed” to process. More information about the give and take leading up to the publication would provide a fuller context for the paper. And a big issue going forward is the financial model by which journals survive, not to mention the question of who should pay for them and how much?

Related posts:

1. [Continual publishing across journals, blogs and social media maximises impact by increasing the size of the ‘academic footprint’.](#)
2. [Altmetrics, a guide to Twitter for academics, and increasing your academic footprint: our round-up of social media blogs in 2011](#)
3. [Peer review should not be such a dominant process in determining research funding allocation, RAND argues](#)
4. [Universities are increasingly moving towards recognising digital scholarship despite conflicting messages that favour traditional publishing in journals](#)
5. [As scholars undertake a great migration to online publishing, altmetrics stands to provide an academic measurement of twitter and other online activity](#)